

direct outgrowth of conference work. Our Sunday-school literature could never have been produced, *as the work of the church*, but by the action of its conference. It is acknowledged that our Sunday-school literature is equal to the best, that it is one of the most successful and influential enterprises of the church, and yet as a *possession* of the church, it could not exist, except as the work of our National Conference. The King's Children Society and its literature, are the product of conference work, and this organization of the young people is destined to wield a great influence in behalf of Christ and the church in years to come. The same may be said of our missionary work. What little we are doing is being done through the action of conferences, as is every other work of any importance. Churches that in these days spend nothing for conference work, spend nothing for missionary work either. The denominations which are now raising hundreds of thousands of dollars, yea, millions, for missionary purposes, are continually holding conferences, and it is through these conferences that their work is done.

Do not forget the National Conference to be held September 3, at Ashland, Ohio. We hope to accomplish a great work for Christ and his church. Pray for its success.

STATISTICS.

We have frequently called the attention of our people to the importance of gathering reliable statistics of the Brethren church. Brother J. Allen Miller has taken charge of this work, and a few weeks ago sent out blank reports to all ministers whose names he could secure, asking them to fill the blanks and return the same. Already quite a number have responded, but the list is far from complete. So far the following churches have been reported,—

Kansas 7; Pennsylvania 20; Illinois 2; Ohio 18; Indiana 18; W. Va. 4; Iowa 4; Virginia 3; Nebraska 2; Michigan 1; Missouri 1; California 2. Whole number 83.

Now, brethren, this is perhaps not more than *one third* of the number of congregations. Why not report at once to Brother Miller. The Annual, or church year book for '96 will be *based on these statistics*, and it is very important that we have full and reliable reports. Brother Holsinger in one of his articles says that the Annual for '95 is very imperfect, and so it is. We want something more nearly

correct, but this we cannot have, unless our people respond to the call for correct statistics. Please consider this matter and act *at once*. Send your statistics to Brother Miller. He is preparing a tabulated statement for the benefit of the Conference and he should have your report at least one week before the Conference. When you come to Ashland and see what Brother Miller has done, the interesting table of statistics he has prepared, you will feel sorry for not having reported. Indiana has, up to date, reported 18 congregations, yet there are from 45 to 50 in the State. The same is true of other States. Why not report now? You cannot but see the importance of the work, and we trust you will take the matter in hand and act at once. Please do so, brethren, we cannot publish a reliable Annual, without correct statistics, and these we cannot secure unless you help us. *Do it now.*

THE "FREE ROSTRUM" AGAIN.

In this issue will be found another contribution on "A Free Rostrum" by brother J. C. Cassel. It is in part a restatement of the principles which he claims should govern our church paper. In our criticism we pointed out the logical results of a "free rostrum" conducted on the principle advocated by Brother Cassel, and naturally they do not meet his approval. We are, however, not responsible for this, as the result announced in our reply is the legitimate outgrowth of the "free rostrum" advocated by our brother, even with all its modifications. The brother intimates that we have misinterpreted his statements and therefore misrepresented him. But the general principle laid down, quoted from his former article, is the *very principle to which we object* and which if followed to its natural conclusion will end in utter confusion. Read his statement, "For the consideration and discussion of every phase of the Christian religion, whether a part of the accepted doctrine of our church or not." "Every phase of the Christian religion" includes a great deal. Catholicism is a "phase of the Christian religion," but our church paper is not open to those who advocate that "phase of it." There are numerous other "phases of the Christian religion" which if discussed in our paper would soon bring a cry of "halt," even from "free rostrum" advocates. Brother Cassel says, "I do not consider spiritualism a phase of the Christian religion." Perhaps not, but we have good, honest, earnest, faithful

brethren in the church, who *do so* consider it, and believe it with all their heart. We are acquainted with such, and they are men whose character is above reproach, honest, zealous, and liberal. Shall the columns of the paper be open for the discussion of their theory? They should have equal rights with Brother Cassel, and what they earnestly believe to be truth, they should, with him, have the privilege to publish. But this phase of the subject, he would bar out, and thus Brother Cassel has already assumed, in his article, a prerogative which he practically denies to the Editor. Here is one of a hundred difficulties to which a "free rostrum" theory leads.

He says, "I do not believe that any member of the church will write anything for the paper that is immical to the cause of the church." This proves nothing except that the brother has a very limited idea or knowledge of what people *do* write for the paper. If he doubts what we say let him take the place of the Editor three months, and on this *one thing we know he will change his opinion*. We have manuscript on hand advocating single immersion, Saturday as the only lawful Sabbath, giving reasons for dispensing with a full meal as the Lord's Supper, condemning Ashland University and Sunday-schools, arguing against an educated ministry, etc., etc. What shall be done with it? Publish it, of course, according to the "free rostrum" theory. The man who spends six months in this office looking over manuscript, will come to the conclusion that an Editor whose business it is to examine manuscript and guard the columns of the paper against error, is a pretty good "institution" after all.

Again, if Brother Cassel had the views and opinions of many good, earnest, sincere brethren, in reference to certain doctrines of the Gospel, and methods of church work as we have them, we predict that he would change his views as to the ability of the average church member to be a judge of what is for the good of the cause.

But it is useless to prolong the controversy. After all is said in favor of a "free rostrum" that can be said, it remains true and must be acknowledged, that even with a core of able contributors, the Editor must carefully scan the manuscript and guard against error "creeping" into the columns of the paper. There is no way, no principle that can be laid down, that will relieve the Editor from this duty, without harm to the cause. Here endeth, at least for a while, the "free rostrum" controversy.